

Scrooge, Marley & Me

By Jane and Jim Jeffries

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"To God be the glory; to us be the blame."

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STORY OF THE PLAY

In this lightly-interactive dinner theatre play, King Scrydan is so cheap that he can't even pay attention. And if he did, he would know that everyone calls him Scrooge behind his back. Coming from beyond Jamaica, his dearly-departed brother Marley, along his Jamaican-to-English interpreter, warns Scrydan that his skinflint ways will lead to a fate worse than death. This Scrooge will be visited by three "Duppy Men" (ghosts) who persuade him by whatever means necessary to mend his ways and live a little. Lots of extra fun by involving the audience, especially for the non-speaking "role" of Tiny Tim! This play can be made into a madrigal dinner theatre piece with additional instructions included in the back of the script.

CHARACTERS

7 m, 7 w, 3 flexible, extras

(With doubling: 7 m, 5 w, 2 flexible, extras)

TOWN CRIER: (*Flexible*) Professional announcement maker of the court.

JESTER: (*M*) Professional funny man of the court.

FIONA / BEGGAR 3: (*W*) A servant at the castle, doubles as her mother in the past.

KING SCRYDAN: (*M*) (*Pronounced scree-duhn*) A cheap-skate king also known as Scrooge.

QUEEN: (*W*) Married to the cheapskate king, but she makes the best of it.

DUKE OF EARL: (*M*) Cousin to the king; likes seconds on meat and dessert.

MARLEY: (*M*) The king's dearly-departed brother; a ghost, a phantom, a transmogrified...

INTERPRETER: (*Flexible*) Jamaican-to-English translator for Marley.

CHRISTMAS PAST: (*W*) The first ghost to visit the king; young and friendly.

QUEEN MUM: (*W*) Young King Scrydan's mother.

YOUNG KING SCRYDAN: (*M*) The king as a young teen.

BEGGAR 1: (*Flexible*) A beggar on the streets of London.

BEGGAR 2 / BOB: (*M*) Another beggar on the streets, doubles as Jester's dearly-departed brother; a ghost, a phantom, a transmogrified...

CHRISTMAS PRESENT: (*M*) Second ghost to visit the king, very loud and boisterous.

CHRISTMAS FUTURE: (*W*) Third ghost to visit the king; grim, like the reaper.

HOLLY: (*W*) Fiona's older daughter.

IVY: (*W*) Fiona's younger daughter.

EXTRAS: (*Flexible*) Pages and courtiers.

Additional doubling possibilities:

CHRISTMAS PAST / HOLLY (*W*)

QUEEN MUM / CHRISTMAS FUTURE (*W*)

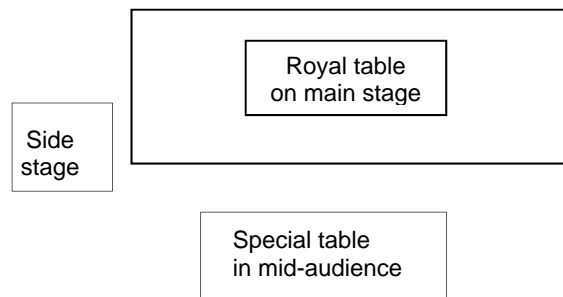
BEGGAR 1 / CHRISTMAS PRESENT (*M*)

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SETTING

The main stage is a castle in the 1500s. A royal table for the King, Queen, and other nobles is in the center. The side stage serves as the place to stand when the Ghosts' visions are acted out on the main stage. A "special table" that is centrally located within the audience should be set up for Servers to make up plates with one olive and one crouton. (On the cue, the servers will bring those members of the audience what everyone else has.)



PROPERTIES

6 Candles for the head table (lit before the guests arrive)
Candle snuffer
2-3 Kazoos for fanfare
2 Dreadlock wigs for Marley and Bob
Ornate purse and sword for Young King
Presents for the mad stampede to carry as they run across stage
3 Presents and 2 small coin purses for Queen Mum
Flowers for Beggar 3
4 Goblets
Sawdust and mud pies
Briefcase with stacks of paper inside
Small table

PRODUCTION NOTES

Shopping Stampede: Utilize whatever cast members and servers who are not on stage. They will enter as one horde, yell ("That's mine!" "Limited supplies!" "I saw it first!"), shove, and jostle each other as they run to other side of stage. (Think of the opening of the most popular store on the day after Thanksgiving, but don't actually let anyone get trampled.)

SCROOGE, MARLEY & ME

(AT RISE: The dining area or performance space looks like an ancient castle. When guests have been seated, JESTER enters the stage.)

JESTER: Wes hale, to our good company!
We welcome you most jovially!

(Enter FIONA, grumpily, who begins to snuff candles from the ROYAL TABLE.)

JESTER: *(Cont'd.)* We bid thee eat! *(Looks at FIONA, confused.)* We bid thee share... *(Looks back at FIONA again.)* Our music and our sumptuous fare! *(Pauses and looks at FIONA again.)* Excuse me, Serving Girl, but what are you doing?

(Enter TOWN CRIER who is rubbing his arms to stay warm.)

FIONA: I'm snuffing the candles.

JESTER and TOWN CRIER: No! *(THEY rush toward the royal table.)*

TOWN CRIER: *(Desperately.)* Why are you doing that?

FIONA: It's the King's orders.

JESTER: *(Grabbing a candle and holding it protectively.)* But we need the light. Haven't you heard? We're living in the Dark Ages.

TOWN CRIER: Forget the light. We need the heat! The King has cut back our firewood ration to three twigs and fifteen pine needles a day.

FIONA: Well, the King says we need to cut back on candle use, too. He says wax doesn't grow on trees, you know.

JESTER: No, it grows on bees. And they, at least, are warm in the winter.

TOWN CRIER: But our guests are freezing! Can't you hear them say, "Brrrrrrr." *(Listens to audience reaction.)* No, make your lips looser and shake your heads.

(HE demonstrates.)

TOWN CRIER: Now, try it again. "Brrrrrrrrrr." *(Waits for audience response.)*

JESTER: See? Our good guests are freezing. *(With his lit candle, JESTER starts lighting candles that have been snuffed.)* We need more light and heat this Christmas season.

FIONA: *(Snuffs another candle.)* I take my orders from the King. *(Pauses.)* Of course, it does seem odd. I mean, doesn't he have a whole treasury to spend? Besides, it is the Christmas season. *(JESTER re-lights the candle.)*

TOWN CRIER: Oh, bah humbug!

FIONA: Excuse me?

TOWN CRIER: "Bah humbug." That's the King's response to Christmas, which he hates. *(Imitating the KING.)* "Just another reason for those cheapskate nobles to expect an invitation to the castle. Christmas has become their excuse to pick a rich man's pocket." *(Awkward pause as TOWN CRIER becomes aware of the audience.)*

JESTER: *(Laughs weakly.)* Of course ... I'm sure he was referring to the nobles in the southern part of the realm—not all of these good guests here tonight. *(Looks meaningfully at TOWN CRIER.)* Isn't that *right*, Town Crier?

TOWN CRIER: *(Awkwardly.)* Why, yes, most certainly.

(FIONA snuffs out two more candles.)

JESTER: No! I beg you! Leave the candles lit!

FIONA: Bah, humbug!

TOWN CRIER: *(To JESTER.)* The King's favorite expression. And it's catching on. I've been hearing that even the nobles are using it more, in fact.

JESTER: The nobles?

TOWN CRIER: Yes. Watch. This section *(Points to left third of the audience)* of nobles just loves to say, "Bah." *(HE improvises until he can get that section of the audience to say, "Bah.")*

JESTER: Not bad, but shouldn't it be said with more disgust? Like this: Bah!

TOWN CRIER: Nice! Let's get the nobles to say it that way.
(HE improvises until he can get that section of the audience to say, "Bah" with a boatload of disgust.)

FIONA: Impressive.

TOWN CRIER: And this section *(Points to the middle third of the audience.)* loves to say, "Hum." *(HE improvises until he can get that section of the audience to say, "Hum.")*

JESTER: Quite nice. But shouldn't "Hum" have more of a musical quality to it?

FIONA: You mean onomatopoeia?

JESTER: Onomatopoeia?

TOWN CRIER: Jester, onomatopoeia is a word that suggests the sound it describes.

JESTER: Come again?

FIONA: The word "hum" suggests humming.

TOWN CRIER: So let's try it with the audience. *(HE improvises until he can get that section of the audience to hum "hum.")*

FIONA: That was beautiful, that was.

JESTER: So all that's left is to get this lot *(Points to the right third of the audience.)* to say "Bug." *(HE improvises until he can get that section of the audience to say, "Bug.")*

TOWN CRIER: *(Hand on chin, appraising the audience's performance.)* I don't know. It's missing something.

FIONA: I know what it needs. "Bug" always sounds better when you add a Southern twang.

TOWN CRIER: Uh, we are in England, you know.

FIONA: Okay, a Southern England twang. *(SHE improvises until she can get that section of the audience to say "Bug" with a twang.)*

JESTER: Beautiful. Now let's put it all together.

(HE improvises until he can get the audience to say, "Bah, Hum, Bug" one section at a time as he points to them. When they are successful, FIONA, TOWN CRIER, and JESTER applaud heartily.)

End of Freeview

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